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ABSTRACT

In 1997, Balwyn High School (Australia) instituted a class of 28 Year 7 students to use laptop computers across the curriculum. This report details findings from an action research project that monitored important aspects of what happened when this program was introduced. A range of measures was developed to assess the influence of the use of laptops on students' perceptions of their own learning. Some observations relating to teaching methodology and teacher perceptions of student performance were also collected. Diary formats completed by the students were used to identify what students were thinking about what was happening in their schooling as they carried their laptop from class to class each day. A coding system was then applied to a variety of diary formats to build up a picture of what the laptops and computers in general meant for student learning. Five coding categories depicted the computer as a tool for getting schoolwork done, with its own special procedures to learn, for access to knowledge and information, for presentation of work, and for playing games. Data collection also included a survey completed by teachers of laptop classes and control classes, and a transition survey concerning satisfaction with the school program completed by parents of a sample of Year 7 students. Includes 15 tables and figures. (Contains 34 references.) (MES)

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